

fear*less

5. GOD OF ALL COMFORT HVC, May 24, 2020 2 Corinthians 1:3-11 (NIV)

What are your thoughts/feelings when you hear about a “public (mature) Christian” (e.g., the two pastors Frank quoted, or Mother Teresa, or someone else) speak about darkness in their lives?

When have you been in a real “pressure cooker” situation? What happened? What relieved it?
[SERENDIPITY]

2 Corinthians 1:3 (NIV)

***Praise be to the God & Father of our Lord Jesus Christ,
the Father of compassion
and the God of all comfort,***

Why do you think Paul uses three expressions for God here?

How do you respond when you think of God in these titles?

Where are places that people tend to look for comfort?

What are some scriptural examples where God brought comfort to someone?

2 Corinthians 1:4 (NIV)

..who comforts us in all our troubles, so that WE can comfort those in any trouble with the comfort we ourselves receive from God.

What, exactly, is Paul praising God for in this passage? When do you praise God for that in your own prayer life?

What is the difference between “comfort” and “sympathy” or “empathy”?

When have you experienced direct comfort from God?

How does God use other people to comfort us? When have you experienced *that*?

What is the most profound suffering you have observed in someone else? How does this verse help you help them?

2 Corinthians 1:5-6 (NIV)

For just as we share abundantly in the sufferings of Christ, so also our comfort abounds through Christ. If we are distressed, it is for your comfort and salvation; if we are comforted, it is for your comfort, which produces in you patient endurance of the same sufferings we suffer.

Are our “ordinary” troubles a part of “the sufferings of Christ,” or just the ones that come because we are Christians? Explain.

Why do you think Paul was always thinking of the Corinthians' welfare?

How much do "others" (the church!) figure in your thinking when you are going through a difficult time?

What difference would it make if you knew your suffering/difficulties were preparing you to help others down the road?

How would your life be different if you had more *patient endurance*? How might you pray for more of that in your life?

2 Corinthians 1:7 (NIV)

And our hope for you is firm,
because we know that just as you share in our
sufferings, so also you share in our comfort.

How confident are you that God can bring comfort to others who are suffering?

2 Corinthians 1:8 (NIV)

We do not want you to be *uninformed*, brothers and sisters,
about the troubles we experienced in the province of Asia.

We were under great pressure,
far beyond our ability to endure,
so that we despaired of life itself.

Have you ever had an experience that you would describe in these terms? Do you know someone who would/could?

How important is it to know exactly what Paul's troubles were? Why/not?

Why does Paul not want them to be *uninformed* about his troubles?

2 Corinthians 1:9 (NIV)

Indeed, we felt we had received the sentence of death.
But this happened
that we might not rely on ourselves
but on God, who raises the dead.

What does God "*raising the dead*" have to do with this? How is that an encouragement for us when we feel like we have the "*sentence of death*"?

What percentage of the time do you rely on yourself and on God? Why is it so hard?

What would be different if you "upped" God's percentage?

Discuss this quote from Philip Hughes:

Confidence in God grows thru experience of his power to deliver.

2 Corinthians 1:10 (NIV)

He has delivered us from such a deadly peril,

and he **will** deliver us **again**.
On him we have **set our hope**
that he will **continue** to deliver us,

Has your suffering (or that of others) left you with
more or *less* confidence in facing the future?

Why is Paul so confident?

2 Corinthians 1:11 (NIV)

...as you **help us** by your **prayers**.
Then ***many*** will **give thanks** on our behalf
for the **gracious favor** granted us
in **answer to the prayers** of many.

Who is praying regularly for you?

For whom are you regularly praying?

What is it like when you see answered prayer?

What “*deadly peril*” (v.10) frightens you the most?
What are some ways you might address that fear
based on this passage?

Who do you know that could use some comfort
today?